BEING AND NOTHINGNESS: The Logos-Centred Ontology

DEFINES BEING IN RELATION TO THE LOGOS; CRITIQUES EXISTENTIALIST ONTOLOGY.

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Abstract

This essay unfolds the ontological vision articulated in *Being and Nothingness: The Logos-Centred Ontology* by S. C. Sayles. It argues that ontology, properly conceived, is not an autonomous discipline of metaphysical speculation but the study of divine revelation itself — for Being, in its deepest truth, is God's continuous self-disclosure. To speak of "existence" apart from God is to speak incoherently; for the possibility of being presupposes the actuality of the One who declares, *I AM THAT I AM*.

Sayles's central claim — that "the Logos is the ground of ontology, the unity of reason, revelation, and reality" — recasts metaphysics as a form of doxology. The essay develops his position across seven major movements:
(1) the divine nature of Being Itself;
(2) the impossibility of nothing;
(3) creation as communication;
(4) the priority of ontology to cosmology;
(5) evil as ontological disorder;
(6) the human vocation as interpretation; and
(7) Christ as the centre and completion of intelligibility.

Throughout, Sayles's Logos-centred framework is shown to restore the unity once shared by philosophy, theology, and science. For the Logos does not merely *explain* reality — He *is* reality's intelligibility, the grammar by which all things cohere. Ontology thus becomes a contemplative reading of revelation, and reason becomes the echo of divine speech.

Introduction — The Question beneath All Questions

Every system of thought eventually confronts the abyss that language cannot cross: *Why is there something rather than nothing?* To pose the question already presumes an answer, for nothingness cannot inquire

about itself. “Nothing has no grammar,” Sayles observes, “and therefore cannot even be named except within the horizon of being.” The capacity to ask is proof that Being precedes both thought and speech.

Where philosophy tends to treat “Being” as an abstract predicate, Sayles treats it as a divine name. “Being Itself,” he writes, “is not an impersonal principle, but the living God who is the fullness of act and the fountain of all possibility.” Existence, then, is revelation before it is phenomenon; every moment of reality is the translation of divine intention into visible form.

The task of ontology, in this light, is not to construct a theory of being but to discern the self-manifestation of God within being. It is a contemplative listening to the eternal *Let there be*, recognising that the world is not silent but articulate, and that every law of nature is a syllable in the ongoing speech of the Logos. To rediscover this grammar is to rediscover both faith and reason, for the two are but different modes of hearing the same Word.

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1 God as Being Itself

“God is not merely one being among others,” Sayles writes, “but the Being of beings — the act without remainder, the reality without origin.” Such an assertion carries immense theological precision. It distinguishes the Creator from the creature not by distance but by mode of existence. In God, essence and existence are identical; in creatures they are bestowed. He *is*; we *are made to be*.

To speak thus is to recover the classical conviction that the name *I AM THAT I AM* (Exod 3:14) is not a title of abstraction but a revelation of personal immediacy. Being is not an attribute that God possesses; it is what God *is*. The difference between divine and created existence, therefore, is not quantitative but qualitative. Finite being depends moment by moment upon the sustaining will of infinite Being. “There is no ontological gap filled by nothing,” Sayles insists, “only the seamless presence of God upholding the creature by His Word.”

This insight also re-frames the meaning of contingency. The creature’s freedom is real, but derivative; its independence is functional, not absolute. To exist is already to participate. Hence every act of thought or love is an echo of the creative fiat; every moment of self-awareness a reflection of the eternal I AM. Ontology becomes adoration, for the recognition of being is simultaneously the recognition of God’s mercy in allowing it to be.

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2 The Impossibility of Nothing

Nothingness has fascinated modern philosophy precisely because it mirrors the modern loss of faith. Yet, as Sayles demonstrates, “the concept of nothingness dissolves the instant it is conceived.” One cannot speak of nothing without turning it into something. Even the word “nothing” presupposes difference, memory, and negation — each a mode of being. The void, therefore, is not the origin of creation but the denial of origin.

In scientific cosmology, vacuum fluctuation or quantum foam is sometimes presented as a creative zero-point. Sayles replies with characteristic clarity: “Fluctuation presupposes law; law presupposes order; order presupposes mind. Therefore the vacuum is not nothing but the residue of divine intelligibility.” The very mathematics by which physicists describe “emptiness” reveals its fullness of relation. The universe, even in its most primitive state, is already structured by the logic of the Logos.

Creatio ex nihilo, then, does not mean emergence from absolute non-being; it means creation without dependence on prior matter. God calls the world into being not from emptiness but from His own plenitude. “Nothing,” Sayles writes, “is not the womb of creation but its negation. The womb of creation is the will of God.” This redefinition transforms the ancient question. The opposite of Being is not an ontological rival but the impossibility of speech. The triumph of existence over nothingness is, therefore, the triumph of the Word over silence.

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3 Creation as Communication

Sayles’s most luminous contribution is his re-imagining of creation as communication. “The cosmos,” he writes, “is not a mechanism but a sentence.” The Genesis refrain, *And God said*, is the fundamental metaphysical statement. God does not build the world; He declares it. Existence is not constructed substance but articulated meaning.

This linguistic ontology reshapes our understanding of natural law. Laws are not external constraints imposed upon matter; they are the internal coherence of divine speech. “Every equation of physics,” Sayles remarks, “is a translation of the Logos into mathematical grammar.” The physicist and the theologian, therefore, interpret different dialects of the same Word. To study creation scientifically is to trace the syntax of divine utterance; to study it theologically is to discern the intention of the Speaker.

Creation, then, is ongoing. The Word once spoken does not fall silent but continues to sustain. Each moment of time is the present tense of the divine verb *to be*. This continuous speaking explains both the stability and the dynamism of the cosmos. It is stable because the Speaker is faithful; it is dynamic because the speech is alive. The world endures not by inertia but by communion.

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4 Ontology before Cosmology

Modern inquiry begins with cosmology — the measurable, the vast, the empirical. Sayles insists that ontology must precede it. “The stars shine because Being is,” he writes. No description of physical process can account for the existence of process itself. Every cosmological theory presupposes intelligibility, and intelligibility is not material. It belongs to the order of the Word.

By reinstating ontology as first philosophy, Sayles reclaims the unity of knowledge. Cosmology describes the speech; ontology contemplates the Speaker. Physics reveals the *what* of reality; metaphysics listens for the *why*. When this hierarchy is forgotten, the sciences become orphaned reason — brilliant in method, impoverished in meaning.

The distinction also illuminates the act of creation itself. Creation is not a temporal beginning but an ontological dependence. “God does not act once and withdraw,” Sayles observes; “He acts eternally in every instant, and His action is Being itself.” The Big Bang, therefore, is not the birth of the Logos but the audible echo of His decree. Ontology gives cosmology its ground, and revelation gives both their coherence.

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5 Evil as Ontological Disorder

If Being is the good made manifest, evil must be disorder within that manifestation. Sayles defines evil as “ontological parasitism — existence turned against its source.” It has no substance of its own; it thrives on distortion. Like static in a broadcast, it interrupts without creating. “Sin,” he writes, “is the attempt of the word to speak apart from the sentence.”

In this formulation, moral and metaphysical truth coincide. To sin is to deny participation, to claim autonomy of meaning. Evil is incoherence, the refusal of grammar. The Fall, then, is not merely ethical rebellion but ontological fragmentation — the shattering of the harmony between being and truth.

Redemption reverses this entropy. At the Cross, the Word enters the field of distortion and re-orders it from within. “At Golgotha,” Sayles writes, “Being confronts its own negation and overcomes it by love; nothingness dies in the act of being named.” The Resurrection is the world’s grammar restored; the sentence of creation resumes where it was interrupted.

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6 The Human Vocation as Interpretation

Human consciousness, in Sayles’s theology, is the point where divine speech becomes understanding. “We are not observers of the cosmos,” he writes; “we are its translators.” The human mind is designed to read reality, to discern meaning, to mirror the Logos in miniature. Reason is therefore covenantal — an agreement between Creator and creature that knowledge shall serve worship.

This vocation endows both science and art with sacred dignity. The scientist uncovers structure; the artist renders resonance; the theologian discerns source. Each, in its own mode, participates in the interpretive labour of Adam naming the creatures. Knowledge becomes stewardship of intelligibility.

Yet when interpretation becomes self-referential, meaning collapses. The modern mind, detached from its Author, reads endlessly but understands nothing. Sayles warns: “The intellect that ceases to praise soon ceases to perceive.” True reason is humility before revelation — the willingness to let the world speak in the language of God.

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7 Christ the Centre of Ontology

All previous insights converge in the Logos incarnate. “The Logos who structures creation,” Sayles writes, “becomes the Word heard within creation.” In Christ, the ground of being enters the field of being; the eternal grammar is spoken in flesh and blood. The Incarnation is therefore the ultimate act of revelation and the definitive answer to ontology’s question.

Christ does not merely reveal God to man; He reveals being to itself. By assuming created nature, He affirms its goodness and heals its disorder. The hypostatic union is the reconciliation of the uncreated and the created, the intelligible and the sensible, the infinite and the finite. “In Him,” Sayles proclaims, “the syntax of heaven and earth is one sentence.”

The Resurrection confirms this unity. Death — the apparent triumph of nothingness — is shown to be a grammatical pause, not a full stop. Being, once wounded, is restored to coherence. “The empty tomb,” Sayles writes, “is the punctuation of eternity within time.” Ontology thus becomes Christology: to know being truly is to know the Word through whom it subsists.

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8 Eschatology and the Restoration of Intelligibility

The consummation of history is not annihilation but illumination. “The end of time,” Sayles writes, “is not the extinction of creation but its comprehension.” Eschatology is the final revelation of meaning, when every fragment of existence finds its place within the completed discourse of God. Truth will no longer be sought, for it will be seen.

In that perfected state, all languages will converge into praise. The divided disciplines of human knowledge will harmonise; philosophy will become worship, and science will become song. “The new heaven and the new earth,” Sayles declares, “will not be another world, but this world rewritten without error.” Evil will vanish not by suppression but by correction; the false sentence will be edited into truth.

This vision renders hope intellectual as well as moral. The believer yearns not only for redemption from sin but for restoration of sense. Salvation is the mind’s reunion with reality, the soul’s re-entry into the divine dialogue.

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9 Reason and Revelation Reunited

In Sayles’s system, reason and revelation are two rays from the same light. Revelation grants content; reason grants comprehension. “Reason itself,” he writes, “is a mode of revelation, and revelation the perfection of reason.” Their historic estrangement is the tragedy of modern thought. When reason declared its independence, it severed itself from the source of intelligibility; when piety distrusted reason, it forfeited clarity. The Logos reconciles both.

A Logos-centred epistemology restores the ancient confidence that truth is one because its Author is one. Scripture, nature, conscience, and intellect are distinct organs of the same illumination. To divide them is to fracture the unity of revelation. Sayles’s entire corpus — from *The Architecture of the Mind* to *The Logos-Centred Cosmology* — works

toward this reintegration. The act of knowing becomes doxological; theology becomes the rational articulation of praise.

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10 Conclusion — The Silence that Speaks

Sayles ends *Being and Nothingness* with a paradox that gathers the entire Logos-centred vision into one sentence:

“God is beyond speech, yet everything that exists is His word.”

This is not poetic excess but metaphysical precision. The mystery of divine transcendence does not cancel revelation; it makes revelation possible. Because God exceeds language, language can endlessly signify Him. Because He is beyond being, all beings can point toward Him.

In that awareness, ontology yields to adoration. The philosopher becomes contemplative; the theologian becomes listener. Every act of reasoning becomes an act of thanksgiving for the fact that there is reason at all. Every moment of existence becomes sacrament — a sign of the uncreated speech that sustains the world.

Thus the circle closes: *In the beginning was the Word*. The beginning is not a temporal point but an eternal principle; it is the grammar of reality itself. From that Word all things proceed, through that Word all things are held, and to that Word all things shall return. The last word of ontology is doxology, and the first word of revelation is being.

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